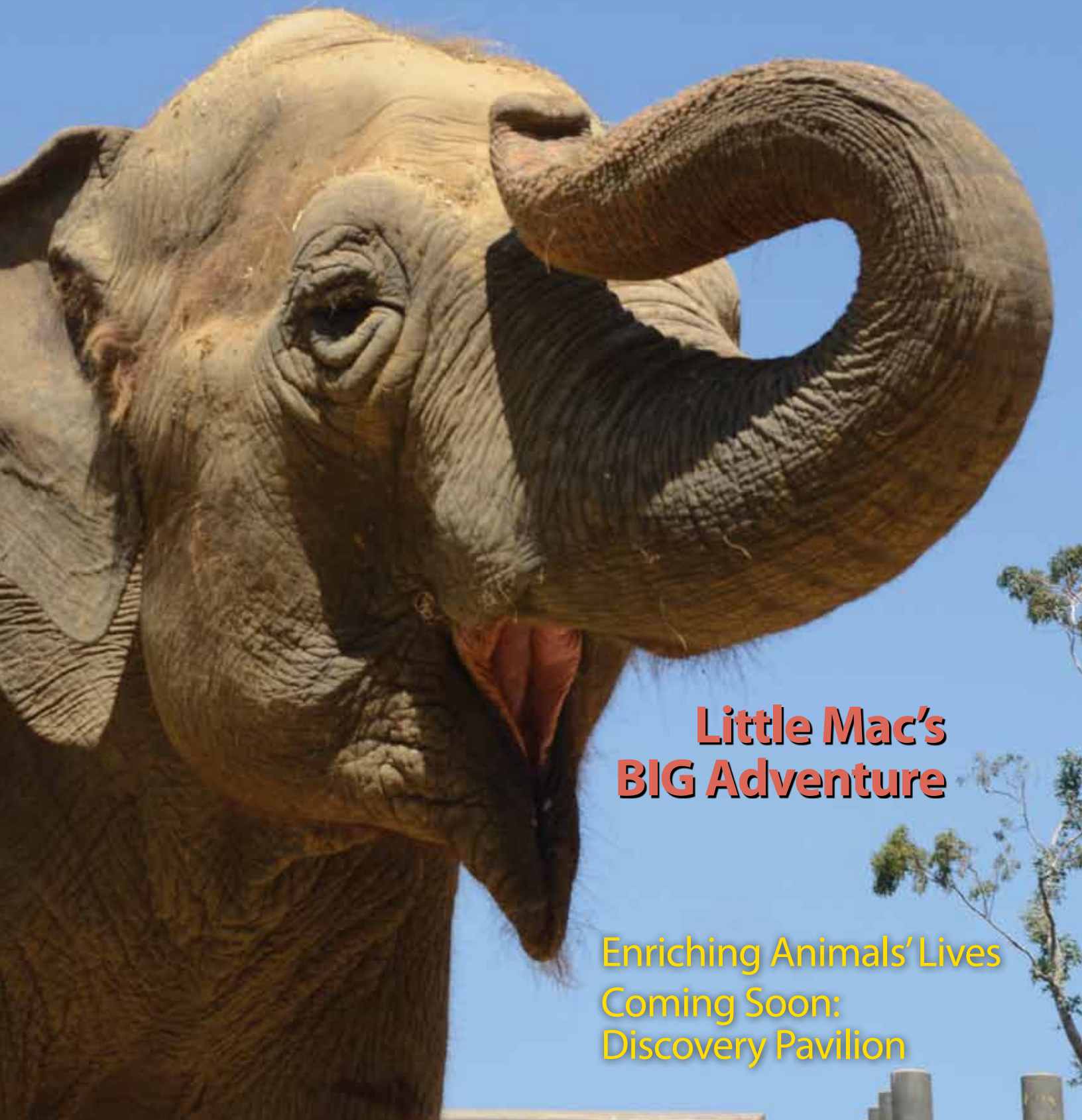


Zoo News

A free publication for Santa Barbara Zoo Friends



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**Little Mac's
BIG Adventure**

Enriching Animals' Lives
Coming Soon:
Discovery Pavilion



Little Mac's
BIG
Adventure

by Sheri Horiszny, Director of Animal Programs

It is no secret that elephants are big. Their impressive size figures into every aspect of their daily care, from how much they eat, to how much they “poop,” to how robust their exhibit needs to be to handle their strength. And, when an elephant has health issues, it’s no small matter.

This spring, Little Mac began to eat more slowly, to lose weight, and her boli (that’s what we call elephant fecal matter or “poop”) began to look like birds’ nests – an indication that she was not grinding her food effectively. Elephants use their four big teeth to grind nearly 50 pounds of food each day. These teeth withstand so much grinding and pressure that elephants have six sets of teeth during their lifetimes, whereas we humans have just two sets! Grinding is the critical first step to elephant digestion and important in their ability to absorb nutrients, so we knew we needed to get help for Little Mac right away. This was especially important since Sujatha was “helping” by taking advantage of Little Mac’s slower eating and stealing as much of her food as possible.

While at an elephant conference in early May, our Elephant Manager, Liz Wilson, spoke about Little Mac’s condition with our longtime consultant, Alan Roocroft. Alan immediately recommended an elephant dental team located in San Diego, and ten days later Dr. Dave Fagan and Dr. Jim Oosterhuis arrived to assess Little Mac’s condition and discuss treatment options with SB Zoo veterinarian, Dr. Julie Barnes. After getting a look in Little Mac’s mouth, and watching her chew, it was quickly determined that dental work was required. The Colyer Institute dental team is a unique combination of a veterinarian who specializes in dentistry, a human dentist who specializes in exotic animal dentistry, a veterinarian who specializes in elephant anesthesia and an elephant management expert. This group then proceeded to give us a crash course in what was required to perform dental work on an animal of this size.

The dental team performs an initial exam before beginning work on Little Mac’s first dental procedure.





YOU CAN STILL HELP LITTLE MAC WITH HER DENTAL BILL! STOP BY THE ZOO, VISIT THE ZOO'S WEBSITE AT SBZOO.ORG, OR TEXT "MAC" TO 20222* TO DONATE \$10 VIA YOUR NEXT PHONE BILL.

*A one-time donation of \$10.00 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. Donor must be age 18+ and all donations must be authorized by the account holder (e.g. parents). By texting YES, the user agrees to the terms and conditions. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. Service is available on most carriers. Donations are collected for the benefit of the Santa Barbara Zoo-Little Mac's Dental Procedure by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at hmgf.org/t. Message & Data Rates May Apply. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting STOP to short code 12321. Text HELP to 12321 for help. Privacy policy at sbzoo.org/privacy-policy.

A comparison between Little Mac's poorly formed teeth (left) and Sujatha's perfect teeth (right).

When you weigh over 8,000 pounds, the weight of your own body makes it a challenge to breathe when you are lying down under anesthesia. So, Dr. Jeff Zuba, a veterinarian at the San Diego Safari Park and a member of the Colyer Institute team, developed a ventilator to breathe for elephants during long procedures. The ventilator looks a lot like a leaf-blower; it provides a steady delivery of oxygen throughout the elephant's body, and therefore a much faster recovery when it's time to stand up again. Additionally, the anatomy and weight of the head of an elephant do not allow access to both sides of the mouth at the same time. Whichever side the elephant is lying on when anesthetized is inaccessible to the dental team. Because Little Mac had issues with all of her teeth, two procedures were required to get her dental work done.

If you think that all of this sounds expensive, you're right! The estimate for completion of Little Mac's dental work was a whopping \$100,000 (for which we had not budgeted this year). Our Board of Directors quickly showed their support and

approved this life-saving procedure, but the support did not stop there. More than \$9,000 has been given by our Members, guests, and friends through donations at the Zoo, online, and via text giving. The opportunity to make a difference for Little Mac was very special for many people of all ages, and we are incredibly grateful for all of the support we have received.

Little Mac had her second visit from the dentists at the end of July, and she has bounced back very well. The dental team was able to file down both lower molars (one during each procedure) to remove pointed front edges that were preventing her from chewing her food properly. They created flat grinding surfaces for her that appear to be working very effectively. She is eating well, has lots of energy, and can now focus on keeping Sujatha from stealing her food!

35-ton crane enters the Zoo to be prepared to help Little Mac stand up if needed.



ELEPHANT DENTISTRY: WHAT IT TAKES

- 12 veterinarians, vet techs & human doctors
- 7 elephant handlers
- 11 additional professionals with varying talents
- 1 35-ton crane
- 300' of rope
- 100' of chain
- 1 case of sugar-free Rockstar
- 1 ventilator resembling a leaf-blower
- 4 twin mattresses
- 20 hay bales

